

My name is Diane Quesnelle and I am the Executive Director of the Energy Marketers Association of Rhode Island. We represent local family owned heating fuel retailers in the state of Rhode Island. I am here today as an advocate for business and consumers.

My organization has been a leader in the region as we transition from home heating oil to clean renewable locally produced Bioheat. And while we embrace low emission fuels and the emission reduction goals set by the states, the Transportation Climate Initiative does not get us there in a way that makes sense.

Limiting the number of gallons of fuel that can be sold will only leave businesses and consumers short of the fuel they need to live. In my state, TCI would create a fuel shortage of 39 million gallons in the first year, rising to over 131 million gallons by 2032.

Fuel shortages will ultimately result in price spikes as consumers make a run on whatever gasoline and diesel fuel is available so they do not find themselves on the short end of the stick when they need to fill up.

How will family owned business make a heating fuel delivery if there is not enough diesel fuel available? How will a service technician respond to a no heat call if there is not enough gasoline for their van to fill up? And the vehicles that are able to obtain fuel will do so at a higher price, as supply and demand economics kick in resulting in prices spike. Who pays for that cost – you got it consumers!

There are available solutions that do not cause fuel shortages, panic buying, and price spikes. Using low carbon liquid fuels and increasing federal vehicle mile standards are proven to reduce emissions without causing consumers pain. There is no reason what so ever to make consumers nervous about if they will be able to fill up or how much more they will have to pay for fuel during a shortage!

I suspect that part of the reason that only three states signed on to TCI while nine others decided not to, is because of the concerns over the issues that we are raising today - but it's not too late to get it right. Fortunately, lawmakers in Rhode Island and Connecticut can still protect the public from this misguided attempt to help the environment and do the right thing by opposing legislation that would authorize participation in TCI.

Fuel shortages that are caused by government programs are unacceptable and I am calling on policymakers to reject legislation (H. 6310/S. 872) that would allow Rhode Island to participate in TCI.